

PLAY ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Key words: children with special needs, play, DPA, play diagnosis, assessment, development,

Children have played through the ages. Modern theories of play view children's play as a means for mastering traumatic experiences, for practicing and consolidating learned skills, for promoting abstract thought, problem solving and flexibility in thinking and for promoting the ability to comprehend multiple levels of meaning. The study of play in infants and children with disabilities has become an increasingly popular area of investigation especially as play relates to later competence in social and academic skills. The children with disabilities did not play with same kinds of materials as typically developing children and they engaged in more nonplay activities and fewer group interactions and had less cognitively sophisticated play than typically developing children. The data indicate that children with disabilities exhibit the same developmental play sequences as typically developing children but with some quantitative and qualitative differences. Without a doubt children have played through the ages. In the turn of the century, views toward play started to change, and it came to be considered a mean-

ingful activity. Certainly, Freud's writings on psychosexual development caused the scientific community to focus on early childhood development and child behavior as a way of understanding the development of adult personality [S. Freud 1905]. In this way, Freud recognized the importance of children's play, even though his own therapeutic efforts were geared solely toward an adult population. Several studies reported that children with developmental disabilities do not appear to develop play activities to the same extent as children developing without disabilities. These children with developmental delays and disabilities often do not appear to be intrinsically motivated to move forward in their play to developmentally more advanced levels. A further problem is that although the children may be competent at certain play activities and engage in these activities with interest and enthusiasm, relatively simple quality of their activities may go unnoticed or be confusing to caregivers and teachers. As a result it is difficult for caregivers and teachers to know how to engage children in play activities beyond highlighting what the children are attending to and appear to be doing. It was not until the work of Melanie Klein [1955, 1960]

and Anna Freud [1946,1966] the play was actually incorporated into the therapeutic process. Using the theoretical background of psychoanalytic concepts, they legitimized and popularized the use of play materials in effective treatment with children.. Erikson [1950,1951,1958,1968] began to formulate and publish his work on youth and child analysis, using his theory of psychosocial development as a foundation, he explained play as an expression of a combination of forces, including individual development, family dynamic, and cultural expectations. The works of these psychologists and many others impetus to a period of rich interest in play, particularly with regard to child treatment and intervention. Children's play was scrutinized with growing attention as psychologists and psychiatrists became increasingly sophisticated in their application of play and in their understanding of its role in children's development. .Certainly, in the assessment of young children, play constitutes a major area of behavioral expression. For preschoolers, play is central and is therefore a particularly powerful evaluation tool..It provides a familiar and less stressful arena in which children can demonstrate their strengths and weaknesses. Play reveals, children's emotional concerns that may be overwhelming or frightening, them, their cognitive style of understanding their experiences, their ability to imitate and interact in the social environment and much more. Because of limitations in language and conceptual development the ability of young children to verbally express what they feel and know is inadequate and often unreliable.

Play assessment offsets this difficulty. Children's use of play in their most comprehensive form of expression like adults drama, children's play has been found to offer a unique access to the unconscious.[Klein ,1955], The information that play observations yield cannot be equaled in its richness and depth. Therefore, this data must be studied in order to directly learn enough about specific problems so that accurate and completely informed diagnosis can be made. For children with special disabilities, play also provides a wealth of otherwise unobtainable material. Such children include those with general cognitive delays for which formal testing is limited in value, as well as children with specific disabilities including sensory and language limitations for which there is but a restricted array of assessment techniques. Further, play provides access to children who because of specific behavior problems [selective mutism, autistic spectrum disorders, conduct disorders] are not amenable to classic test batteries. It allows children to gain a safe distance from sensitive, threatening, distasteful, or taboo issues, thereby reducing their anxiety and freeing them to express and recall what may otherwise be denied or unidentified in a verbal interview. These children's limitations in play and their difficulties in moving to and sustaining more advanced forms of play may be due to their difficulties in learning general .As a result, play as a while for learning about objects and events, concrete or a symbolic level will most likely be restricted. The assessment of play can function as an important adjunct to more formalized testing and inter-

viewing in any population of children. Play assessment serves to validate and expand the information acquired from more specific instruments such as IQ tests or the Children's Apperception Test [CAT]. The study of play in infants and children with disabilities has become an increasingly popular area of investigation, especially as play relates to later competence in social and academic skills [Bretherton, 1984, Christie 1991, 2006]. A number of investigators have explored, the emergence of symbolic play and language in children with disabilities and the nature of play behavior and interaction in children with disabilities, [Casby and Ruder 1983, 2003]. The children with disabilities did not play with the same kinds of materials as typically developing children, and they engaged in more nonplay activities and fewer group interactions and had less cognitively sophisticated

play than typically developing children [Mendes 1982]. The data indicate that children with disabilities exhibit the same developmental play sequences as typically developing children, but with some qualitative and quantitative differences [Field, Roseman 1982]. In diagnostic and assessment work use of play diagnosis and DPA as useful instrument. The Developmental Play Assessment DPA Instrument [Lifer, Edwards, Avery, Anderson and Sulzer-Azaroff 1988, Lifer 1996] was developed to assess the play activities of children with developmental delays and disabilities in order to determine what they know and what they are ready to learn. This information is then used for the design and implementation of individualized play intervention programs to facilitate the children's progress in development, for planning educational programs.

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Ազատյան Թ.

Խաչատուր Աբովյանի անվան հայկական պետական մանկավարժական համալսարանի հատուկ մանկավարժության և հոգեբանության ամբիոնի դոցենտ, մանկավարժական գիտությունների թեկնածու

Ասոյան Լ.

Խաչատուր Աբովյանի անվան հայկական պետական մանկավարժական համալսարանի հատուկ մանկավարժության և հոգեբանության ամբիոնի դասախոս

Հոդվածում ներկայացված է հատուկ կարիքներ ունեցող երեխաների խաղային գործունեության առանձնահատկությունները: Խաղը երեխայի ինքնարտահայտման և սեփական աշխարհին հարմար-

վելու միջոցներից մեկն է: Մեր կողմից քննարկվել է նաև DPA-ի օգտագործումը հատուկ կարիքներ ունեցող երեխաների խաղային գործունեությունը հետազոտելու և գնահատելու համար:

РЕЗЮМЕ

ОЦЕНКА ИГРОВОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ ДЕТЕЙ С НАРУШЕНИЯМИ РАЗВИТИЯ

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Ребенок с нарушением развития испытывает удовольствие от процесса игры, ее результат не так важен и представляет собой попытку ребенка организовать свой опыт, свой личный мир. В процессе игры ребенок испытывает чувство контроля над ситуацией, даже, если

реальные обстоятельства противоречат этому. Это единственная деятельность ребенка, имеющая место во все времена и у всех народов. Детей не надо учить играть, их не надо заставлять играть. Они играют спонтанно, охотно, с удовольствием, не преследуя никаких

определенных целей. Исследование игры детей с ограниченными возможностями стало все более и более популярной областью исследования, тем более, что игра имеет отношение с более поздней компетентностью в социальных и академических навыках. Данные указывают, что дети с ограниченными возможностями показывают

ту же самую последовательность развития игры, что и типично развивающиеся дети, но с небольшим количеством качественных и количественных различий. В статье также рассматривается использование инструмента DPA [The Developmental Play Assessment Instrument] в обследовании игры детей с нарушениями развития.